

Forces in order to determine the effectiveness of such policies and procedures during such fiscal year in providing an appropriate response to such sexual assaults.

(g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—(1) Not later than April 1, 2005, and January 15 of each year thereafter, each Secretary of a military department shall submit to the Secretary of Defense a report on the sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Force concerned during the preceding year.

(2) Each report on an Armed Force under paragraph (1) shall contain the following:

(A) The number of sexual assaults against members of the Armed Force, and the number of sexual assaults by members of the Armed Force, that were reported to military officials during the year covered by such report, and the number of the cases so reported cases that were substantiated.

(B) A synopsis of and the disciplinary action taken in each substantiated case.

(C) The policies, procedures, and processes implemented by the Secretary concerned during the year covered by such report in response to incidents of sexual assault involving members of the Armed Force concerned.

(D) A plan for the actions that are to be taken in the year following the year covered by such report on the prevention of and response to sexual assault involving members of the Armed Forces concerned.

(3) Each report under paragraph (1) in 2006, 2007, and 2008 shall also include the assessment conducted by the Secretary concerned under subsection (f).

(4) The Secretary of Defense shall transmit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives each report submitted to the Secretary under this subsection, together with the comments of the Secretary on each such report. The Secretary shall transmit the report on 2004 not later than May 1, 2005, and shall transmit the report on any year after 2004 not later than March 15 of the year following such year.

(h) REQUIREMENT TO DEVELOP DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT.—Prior to developing policies and programs on the prevention of and response to sexual assaults, the Department of Defense, in consultation with the Service Secretaries, shall develop a definition of sexual assault that is uniform for all the Armed Forces, including but not limited to rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, and other criminal offenses.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 648, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I urge the adoption of this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time at this moment.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Who seeks time in opposition to the amendment?

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, but I am not in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

□ 2115

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, Americans are concerned about the welfare of the men and women we send to defend our country. The American people understand that war is violent. What the American people will not tolerate is the assault or rape of a female soldier by a fellow soldier. Simply put, this is unacceptable.

Recent reports of sexual assaults of female soldiers serving abroad, along with numerous cases of assaults in or around military bases, clearly demonstrate the need for the Department of Defense to change their approach to this problem.

Women are serving in the military, and we are mighty proud of them. Along with my colleagues today, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE), we offer this amendment to help the military work through this problem, understand its causes, and put in place measures that will prevent it from happening.

The amendment calls for the Secretary of Defense to increase training for officers so they are better equipped to deal with sexual assaults. The amendment calls for a clear and precise protocol that protects privacy and ensures safety and which women can follow to report an attack. The amendment ensures access to the appropriate medical treatment and counseling for women at all times during their service, no matter where they are in the world. This policy is to be put in place by January 1, 2005.

Members of both the House and Senate, including my colleagues on the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, have examined this issue, along with the Department of Defense's Task Force on Care For Victims of Sexual Assault. We agree that the action called for in this amendment is beyond necessary to deal with the multiple incidents of sexual assaults in the military.

These steps, which are being mirrored in the Senate's version of the legislation, will help the Armed Forces prevent attacks from happening, as well as put proper procedures in place that bring aid and comfort to those who have survived attacks.

I am hopeful the action by this Congress will help bring a change in the attitude in the U.S. military. It needs to be made perfectly clear that it is unacceptable to sexually assault a female soldier; and if you choose to make that mistake, you will be held accountable for your actions, no matter who you are, what your rank is, or what condition you serve under. I am in full and hardy support of this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), the principal author of this amendment,

and that she be allowed to control that time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Missouri very much for his leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of an amendment to the fiscal year 2005 DOD authorization bill which I am offering with the leadership of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and my good friend, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

This bipartisan amendment will help us take a first step in addressing the problems of sexual assault within the military. Last Thursday, the DOD Task Force on Care For Victims of Sexual Assault released its report and recommendations concerning the problem based on a 90-day study. The Slaughter/Capito/Solis/Brown-Waite amendment is based on the report findings and will help to implement several of the recommendations made by the DOD task force.

Specifically, it would require the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive policy for DOD on the prevention of and response to sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces. This comprehensive policy would be based on the recommendations of the task force. In addition, the amendment would require the DOD to take related measures to address sexual assaults in the military, such as reporting the improvement of DOD's capability to respond to sexual assaults, applying the comprehensive policy to all military departments instead of each branch having its own, modifying the policies and procedures of the military departments, annually assessing the policies and procedures, and issuing reports to the Senate and the House Committee on Armed Services.

On March 31 of this year, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues held a forum on sexual assaults in the military and submitted its report from the caucus to the Secretary. The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues has committed to continuing to take a leadership role in addressing this issue.

Mr. Chairman, 120 women have already come back from Iraq saying they have been sexually assaulted by their fellow soldiers. Only 20 of them reported it in the military because of the fact it would end their career. We want to change this attitude and this culture.

Now, a similar version of this amendment has already been included in the Senate version of the fiscal year 2005 DOD authorization bill and has good bipartisan support in the Senate. It has been developed in consultation with the Pentagon and is intended to help the Pentagon start implementing the concrete proactive measures that are outlined in the task force's report.

We want to help, because the Pentagon, in previous reports, has stated